New towers of BSNL

1665. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to poor quality of receptivity and audibility, the BSNL has planned to energise 1000 new towers across Karnataka to widen its mobile network;

(b) whether BSNL has planned to build 300 new towers for Bangalore urban area to cater to the increasing number of BSNL cellular connections; and

(c) whether BSNL has set any deadline for installation of these towers and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is in process of expanding its Cellular Mobile Network by installation of additional around 900 cellular mobile Base Transceiver Station (BTS) towers in the State of Karnataka to provide additional coverage and improve Quality of Service in the State.

(b) and (c) BSNL has planned 300 additional cellular mobile BTS towers in Bangalore urban area to augment its cellular mobile network capacity for providing additional mobile connections in the town by the end of March, 2006.

Release of pre-paid mobile connections in Bangalore

1666. SHRI K.B. KRISHNAMURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken so far by the BSNL to widen its mobile network in Karnataka;

(b) the steps taken to increase the availability of pre-paid SIM cards in Karnataka and particularly in Bangalore; and

(c) the number of pre-paid mobile connections to be provided in Bangalore by the end of March 2006?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and

(b) Sir, BSNL is continuously augmenting its cellular network in Karnataka. BSNL has planned to commission around 900 more New Mobile Base Stations to improve the cellular network coverage in the State of Karnataka during the current financial year. SIM cards are released commensurate with the availability of capacity progressively.

(c) BSNL has made the provision for about 2.5 lakh additional Cellular prepaid Mobile connections by the end of March 2006 in Bangalore.

Broadband subscribers in the country

1667. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had set a target of three million broadband subscribers by the end of December this year;

(b) whether the said target has been achieved so far;

(c) what percentage of the target has been met by the PSU operators BSNL and MTNL; and

(d) the details of incentives Government consider to give to the subscribers in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Government announced Broadband Policy 2004 on 14th October, 2004 with a view to provide impetus to broadband and Internet penetration in the country envisaging 3 million broadband subscribers by the end of 2005 out of which 1.5 million was to be provided by PSU operators, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL). As per available information, the total number of broadband Internet subscribers in the country, as on 31.10.2005, is around 7.1 lakhs. BSNL and MTNL have contributed 3.1 lakh subscribers, as on 31.10.2005, which is 20.7% of target of 1.5 million proposed by them.

(d) The price of Broadband service has come to an affordable level of Rs. 250 and 199 per month being offered by BSNL and MTNL. Government has recently announced reduction in license fee for National Long Distance/ International Long Distance service licensees from 1st January, 2006. This is expected to further reduce the cost of broadband services and therefore stimulate the demand for broadband services in the country.